

2. All men have certain natural, essential, and inherent rights—among which are, the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property ; and, in a word, of seeking and obtaining happiness.

3. When men enter into a state of society, they surrender up some of their natural rights to that society, in order to ensure the protection of others ; and without such an equivalent the surrender is void.

4. Among the natural rights, some are in their very nature unalienable, because no equivalent can be given or received for them. Of this kind are the *rights of conscience*.

5. Every individual has a natural and unalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and reason : and no person shall be hurt, molested, or restrained in his person, liberty, or estate, for worshipping God in the manner most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience, or for his religious profession, sentiments, or persuasion ; provided he doth not disturb the public peace, or disturb others in their religious worship.

6. As morality and piety, rightly grounded on evangelical principles, will give the best and greatest security to government, and will lay, in the hearts of men, the strongest obligations to due subjection ; and as the knowledge of these is most likely to be propagated through a society by the institution of the public worship of the Deity, and of public instruction in morality and religion ; therefore, to promote these important purposes, the people of this state have a right to empower, and do hereby fully empower, the legislature, to authorize, from time to time, the several towns, parishes, bodies corporate, or religious societies, within this state, to make adequate provision, at their own expense, for the support and maintenance of public protestant teachers of piety, religion, and morality :

*Provided, notwithstanding,* That the several towns, parishes, bodies corporate, or religious societies, shall at all times have the exclusive right of electing their own public teachers, and of contracting with them for their support and maintenance : And no person, of any one particular religious sect or denomination, shall ever be compelled to pay towards the support of the teacher or teachers of another persuasion, sect, or denomination.

And every denomination of Christians, demeaning themselves quietly, and as good citizens of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the law : and no subordination of any one sect or denomination to another, shall ever be established by law.

And nothing herein shall be understood to affect any former contracts made for the support of the ministry ; but all such contracts shall remain, and be in the same state, as if this constitution had not been made.

7. The people of this state have the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free, sovereign, and independent state ; and do, and for ever hereafter shall, exercise and enjoy every power, jurisdiction, and right, pertaining thereto, which is not, or may not hereafter be, by them expressly delegated to the United States of America in congress assembled.

8. All power residing originally in, and being derived from the peo-